

GENIUS LOCI

LASZLOVSZKY 60

edited by
Dóra Mérai
and

Ágnes Drosztmér, Kyra Lyublyanovics,
Judith Rasson, Zsuzsanna Papp Reed,
András Vadas, Csilla Zatykó



ARCHAEOLINGUA

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The Marketplace of Csütörtök – A Local Market in Fourteenth-Century Hungary

BALÁZS NAGY*

Csütörtök (Csütörtökhely, Csallóközcsütörtök), Donnersmarkt according to its German name, is currently called Štvrtek na Ostrove and lies about 20 km southeast of Bratislava (Pozsony, Pressburg), the capital city of Slovakia.¹ The wider region of Csütörtök is hallmarked by an 84 km-long river island in the Danube, called Csallóköz (Große Schüttinsel, Žitný ostrov), which extends from the outskirts of Bratislava almost as far as Komárno. The Csallóköz is actually the largest river island in Europe, surrounded by the main stream of the Danube from the southwest and by the side branch of the Little Danube and the Vág (Váh) from the northeast.² All the different name variants of this settlement refer to Thursday, its medieval market day.

The population of Štvrtek na Ostrove is currently rather low, about 1700 inhabitants. It seems to have been an ordinary settlement in Pozsony County in the network of medieval market towns of Hungary, with busy weekly markets.³

The earliest reference to the existence of Csütörtök goes back to the mid-thirteenth century.⁴ What gives Csütörtök special significance is the information which comes from a 1333 charter. In that year, two members of the Szentgyörgyi family divided Csütörtök between them and to guarantee the agreement they went to the chapter of Pozsony to have the settlement documented.⁵ The chapter sent their representatives to Csütörtök, where they made a visit and recorded the terms of the agreement on the spot. Returning to Pozsony, they sent a written report on the transaction to Charles I, king of Hungary, on July 9, 1333. This charter gives a rare description of a local market in fourteenth-century Hungary.⁶ The Szentgyörgyi family was de-

scended from the Hont-Pázmány kindred and at that time two brothers were active, Sebes II (1304–1353) and Péter I (1308–1365).⁷

According to the agreement, the western side of the town was owned by Sebes and the eastern side by Peter.⁸ The two parts of the town were divided by a muddy stream. The parish church of Csütörtök stood in the middle of the settlement and remained in the joint use of both parts of the population after the division. Peter's part was used for marketing cattle, horses, and other animals and also furs and leather products. This part of the market was also where linen fabric and textile articles were sold. Foodstuffs sold either in bowls or loose were also available on Peter's side. Weaving and trade in grey cloth also took place on this side, but the wooden structure for drying the cloth was on Sebes' side. The market for resident and non-resident butchers, millers, bakers, shoemakers, and cobblers to sell their goods was on Sebes' side. Wine and other beverages transported in barrels to Csütörtök were also sold here, although it was allowed to sell beverages to drink in both parts of the town. Carters delivered crops and grain to Sebes' part in wagons and carts, but it was sold in smaller quantities in the other part of the settlement. Firewood and timber for building houses, wagons and wagon wheels, animal skins, chests and boxes, and all different types of used clothing with the exception of furs and leather products were also sold on Sebes' side, and, in addition, all leguminous vegetables. This part was also the place of hawkers selling food and beverages. Entering the arrangement, the two brothers also agreed that the tariff paid at the market should be split equally between them.

The selection of the commercial goods at the market of Csütörtök is a good example of the commercial traffic of market towns in Hungary in the first half of the fourteenth century. In the

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► Fig. 1. Csütörtök (Štvrtok na Ostrove) on the First Military Mapping Survey of the Austrian Empire. Source: Magyarország (1782-1785) – Első Katonai felmérés, <https://mapire.eu>.

case of Csütörtök, we should also keep in mind its special location. Situated in the vicinity of Pozsony and also close to the Danube we may assume that there was direct trade contact between Pozsony and Csütörtök. The burghers of Pozsony might have bought their supplies, especially foodstuffs, in Csütörtök and also sold some of their urban-made products there.

The variety of commercial goods available in Csütörtök reflected a diverse and complex system of trade. The market was dominated by live animals (cattle, horses) and animal products (skins, furs, leather). Butchers, millers, and bakers represented the processing of agricultural commodities.⁹ Foodstuffs, grocery products, and wine were also offered at the market in both retail and wholesale trade. The reference to firewood and timber means that forest products were available as indispensable commodities in the local commerce of that period.

Besides large-scale commerce, handicrafts, and local small-scale industrial products were also present in the market of Csütörtök. In addition to shoemakers and cobblers, the reference to the local production of grey cloth represented a complex urban industry. Grey cloth was a comparatively cheap type of wool product, available on the market of Hungary from the thirteenth century onwards, with its local production starting soon thereafter. It was called grey cloth not because of its colour, but because it was an undyed and rough textile. Its price was no more than 8–12% of the high quality dyed cloth of Flemish or Florentine origin.¹⁰ Industrial products of non-local origin on the market of Csütörtök included clothing, chests

and boxes, wagons and wagon wheels and different types of linen textiles. The busy market also necessitated a regular need for transportation; wine was carried in barrels, grain by wagons. This diverse composition of commercial goods in the traffic of a market town might have been typical for the northwestern border region of Hungary, but certainly not for the whole country.

Although created several centuries later, the first military survey of Hungary completed by the Habsburg military authorities in 1782 to 1785 gives a reliable topographic overview of Csütörtök. There the bipartite layout of the settlement is clearly visible, with the parish church on the central main street of the settlement.¹¹

Csütörtök is a telling name, since its meaning comes from the name of the fourth day of the week, Thursday.¹² It refers to the fact that the usual market day of Csütörtök was on Thursdays. In the Hungarian toponymic tradition it was relatively widespread to use particular days of the week for the naming of settlements. All the days of the week from Monday to Saturday were used in place names referring to the market day of the given settlement. The word for Sunday is a special case in Hungarian, since the word for that day, *vasárnap*, comes directly from the expression “market day.”¹³ Using Monday and Tuesday was less frequent, but all the day names from Wednesday until Saturday were common. In medieval Hungary more than a dozen place names were connected to a Thursday market day; one of them was in Detreköcsütörtök (Plavecký Štvrtok) also in Pozsony County, only about 50 km northwest of Csütörtök.¹⁴

Although the vicinity to Pozsony made Csütörtök's location favourable and attractive for regional commerce, it was not a unique market town in fourteenth-century Hungary. The survival of the 1333 charter and the description of Csütörtök's market make this settlement special since based on this detailed account we can make a hypothetical reconstruction of the lively activities of a weekly market in the northwestern border region of medieval Hungary.¹⁵

Notes

- ¹ Other name variants include: Loipersdorf, Leopoldsdorf.
- ² László Makkai, "A Csallóköz településtörténeti vázlata" [An outline of the settlement history of Csallóköz], *Századok* 81 (1947): 109–135.
- ³ Elemér Mályusz, "A mezővárosi fejlődés" [Market-town development], in *Tanulmányok a parasztság történetéhez Magyarországon a 14. században*, ed. György Székely (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1953), 130–131; András Kubinyi, "Gondolatok a középkor végi alföldi és alföld-széli mezővárosaink alaprajzi és építészeti fejlődéséről" [Thoughts on the late medieval topographical and architectural development of market towns on the Great Hungarian Plain and its surroundings in Hungary], *Építés – Építészettudomány* 15 (1983): 285. On the market towns of medieval Hungary, with special reference to Csütörtök, see: Vera Bácskai, "Mezőgazdasági áruterelés és árucsera a mezővárosokban a XV. században" [Agricultural production and exchange of commodities in market towns in the fifteenth century], *Agrártörténeti Szemle* 6 (1964): 18; Vera Bácskai, *Magyar mezővárosok a XV. században* [Hungarian market towns in the fifteenth century] (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1965), 69.
- ⁴ 1254: Cheturtukheil. Richard Marsina, ed., *Codex diplomaticus et epistolaris Slovaciae* (Bratislava: Academia Scientiarum Slovaca, 1987), II, 310–312, No. 447. Cf. 331. 32.
- ⁵ On the estates of the Szentgyörgyi family, see: Bálint Ila, "A Szentgyörgyi és Bazini grófok birtokainak kialakulása" [The emergence of the estates of counts of Szentgyörgyi and Bazin], *Turul* 44 (1927): 36–71. On Csütörtök: 40–41.
- ⁶ Imre Nagy, ed., *Anjoukori okmánytár. Codex diplomaticus Hungaricus Andegavensis* (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Kiadóhivatala, 1883), III (1333–1339), 33–35. See also: Gyula Kristó, ed., *Anjou-kori Oklevéltár* [Cartulary of the Angevin Period] (Szeged, Budapest: Szegedi Középkorász Műhely, 2002), XVII, 157–158, No. 345. Hungarian translation: Gyula Kristó and Ferenc Makk, ed., *Károly Róbert emlékezete* [The memory of Charles Robert], (Budapest: Európa, 1988), 169–170.
- ⁷ Tamás Körmendi, "A Hontpázmány nemzetség címerváltozatai a középkorban" [The variations of the coat of arms of the Hontpázmány kindred in the Middle Ages], *Levéltári Közlemények* 82 (2011): 3–77, Cf: 56, 77.

- ⁸ For a detailed historical overview of the development of the market of Csütörtök and its tariffs, see: Boglárka Weisz, *A királyketteje és az ispán harmada. Vámok és vám-szedés Magyarországon a középkor első felében* [The king's half and the comes's third. Customs and customs duties in Hungary in the first half of the Middle Ages] (Budapest: MTA Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont Történettudományi Intézet, 2003), 117–118.
- ⁹ In medieval Hungary the activity of the butchers' guild of Buda is one of the best known representatives of urban industries. The guild book of the Buda butchers covers the years between 1500 and 1529, roughly two centuries later than the reference to the butchers of Csütörtök. This and the difference of the character of the royal residence and a market town of regional significance makes comparison difficult. For the Buda butchers' guild book see: István Kenyeres, ed., *Zunftbuch und Privilegien der Fleischer zu Ofen aus dem Mittelalter – A budai német mészárosok középkori céhkönyve és kiváltságlevellei* (Budapest: Budapest Főváros Levéltára, 2008).
- ¹⁰ Walter Endrei, *Patyolat és posztó* [Cambric and blaize] (Budapest: Magvető, 1989), 128–129. Zsigmond Pál Pach, "Pannus coloratus és pannus griseus a XIII. századi Magyarországon" [Pannus coloratus and pannus griseus in thirteenth-century Hungary], in: *Tanulmányok Karácsonyi Béla 70. születésnapjára*, ed. Péter Kulcsár, Béla Mader, and István Monok (Szeged: József Attila Tudományegyetem Központi Könyvtára, József Attila Tudományegyetem Bölcsészettudományi Kar Magyar Történeti Tanszéke, 1989), 71–80; Zsigmond Pál Pach, "A debreceni posztószövek legrégebbi céhszabadalma. Egy 14. század végi oklevél utóélete" [The oldest guild privilege of the Debrecen cloth-makers. The consequences of a charter from the end of the fourteenth century], *Századok*, 129 (1995): 64.
- ¹¹ First Military Mapping Survey of the Austrian Empire, (German: Josephinische Landesaufnahme), for the online version of the survey see: Magyarország (1782–1785) – Első Katonai felmérés, accessed October 21, 2018, <https://mapire.eu>
- ¹² The word *csütörtök* is connected etymologically to several similar words in South Slavic languages, e.g., Old Church Slavonic, Bulgarian, Serbian, and Croatian, but is also connected to other Slavic forms, i.e., in Slovak and Polish. In all these languages the origin of the word goes back to the meaning of "four," and "the fourth day of the week." See: *A magyar nyelv történeti-etimológiai szótára* [A historical-etymological dictionary of the Hungarian language] (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1984) I, 583.
- ¹³ György Györffy, "A magyar nemzetségtől a vármegyéig; a törzstől az orszáig" [From the Hungarian kindred to the royal counties; from the tribe to the country], *Századok* 92 (1958): 30.
- ¹⁴ Ferenc Szabó, "A hét napjai a helységnevekben" [The days of the week in Hungarian place names], *Névtani Értesítő* 16 (1994): 51–55; Ferenc Szabó G., *A vásározás emlékei középkori helységneveinkben* [Memory of markets in medieval Hungarian place names] (Nyíregyháza: Bessenyei György Könyvkiadó, 1998). 46, 59–63, esp. 61–62.
- ¹⁵ András Kubinyi, "Professional merchants and the institutions of trade: domestic trade in late medieval Hungary" in *The Economy of Medieval Hungary*, ed. József Laszlovszky, Balázs Nagy, Péter Szabó, and András Vadas (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 441–442.